

Written Testimony for Appropriations Committee – February 11, 2010
Elizabeth J. McDermott
Norwalk, CT 06854

I have a chronic and unpredictable mental illness that can produce a crisis at any time. My last true psychotic breakdown was 13 years ago, at age 42. I was hospitalized at Hall-Brooke, now St. Vincent's Behavioral Health Services, in Westport for three weeks. Since I was 25, I have been hospitalized over forty times. In-hospital crises, including an emergency room drug overdose and a psychotic reaction to a medication, have been learning experiences for both me and my doctors.

Despite my illness, I was able to work full time until 16 years ago, when I applied for and received Social Security Disability Insurance. I also have Medicaid and Medicare Parts A and B. The state pays my Part B premiums. In addition, I have Medicare Part D, the Prescription Drug Program. Social Security Extra Help pays my Part D premiums.

With the help of medications, my doctors, support from friends and my own coping strategies, I have been able to manage my illness, take advantage of financial assistance programs, and even work part time. Two important medications for me are Ativan and Klonopin, which I take for sleep. If I don't sleep, I get psychotic and have to be hospitalized.

My Medicare Part D prescription drug plan does not cover these two drugs; they're in a class called benzodiazepines, which Part D plans are not required to cover. Until this January, the Department of Social Services paid for them. I qualified because I am a "dual-eligible" – I have both Medicare and Medicaid. But since January 1, DSS no longer pays for them. This is one of the cutbacks already in effect.

I am fortunate to have a part-time job, so I can afford to pay \$60 a month out of pocket for these two drugs. But many of my friends cannot pay for their drugs. They become what are known as "revolving door patients." They get sick, are hospitalized and stabilized, and return to society. But they still can't afford their medications so the vicious cycle starts again.

Getting sick and being hospitalized are bad enough. But there is another side: it's also expensive. Attached is a copy of the bill for my last hospitalization, a four-day stay at Norwalk Hospital's psychiatric unit, CP3. The total came to \$7,285. The hospital charged off \$1,000 and federal and state programs (Medicare and Medicaid) paid the rest. By continuing to provide full prescription drug benefits for people with psychiatric illnesses, the state can avoid serious psychiatric crises and expensive hospitalizations like this.

Thank you for listening to my story,

Elizabeth J. McDermott

NORWALK HOSPITAL
24 STEVENS STREET
NORWALK, CT 06850-3852
Statement on: 01/27/10 at 11:18 AM

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Guarantor: MCDERMOTT ELIZABETH

NORWALK, CT 06854-0000

Patient: MCDERMOTT ELIZABETH

Date	Svc Code	Description	Units	Debits	Credits
03/19/07	1214	CBC WITH DIFFERENTIAL	1	43.00	
03/19/07	6041	COMP METABOLIC PANEL	1	85.00	
03/19/07	8571	VENIPUNCTURE ONLY	1	12.00	
03/19/07	51214	DX INTERVIEW	1	359.00	
03/19/07	72121	CP3 PSYCH SEMI PRIV R	1	1474.00	
03/19/07	30000348	CLONAZEPAM 0.5MG TAB	1	6.85	
03/19/07	30000349	CLONAZEPAM 1MG TAB	1	6.95	
03/19/07	30000883	LORAZEPAM 1MG TAB	1	6.85	
03/19/07	30001648	TRIHEXYPHENID 2MG TAB	1	6.20	
03/19/07	30002145	RISPERDAL 2MG TAB	3	34.20	
03/19/07	30002333	DEPAKOTE ER 500MG TAB	1	8.65	
03/19/07	30003025	DEPAKOTE ER 250MG	1	7.50	
03/20/07	51278	SUB IP CARE, LOW	1	105.00	
03/20/07	72121	CP3 PSYCH SEMI PRIV R	1	1474.00	
03/20/07	30000348	CLONAZEPAM 0.5MG TAB	1	6.85	
03/20/07	30000349	CLONAZEPAM 1MG TAB	1	6.95	
03/20/07	30000856	LEVOTHROID 137MCG TAB	1	6.35	
03/20/07	30000883	LORAZEPAM 1MG TAB	1	6.85	
03/20/07	30001648	TRIHEXYPHENID 2MG TAB	1	6.20	
03/20/07	30001670	TYLENOL 325MG CAPLET	4	12.10	
03/20/07	30002109	HALDOL 1MG TAB	1	6.40	
03/20/07	30002145	RISPERDAL 2MG TAB	4	41.60	
03/20/07	30002333	DEPAKOTE ER 500MG TAB	2	17.30	
03/21/07	1989	URINALYSIS MACRO ONLY	1	13.00	
03/21/07	6219	VALPROIC ACID	1	76.00	
03/21/07	8571	VENIPUNCTURE ONLY	1	12.00	
03/21/07	51278	SUB IP CARE, LOW	1	105.00	
03/21/07	72121	CP3 PSYCH SEMI PRIV R	1	1474.00	
03/21/07	30000138	ASPIRIN CHILD 81MG TA	1	6.05	
03/21/07	30000348	CLONAZEPAM 0.5MG TAB	1	6.85	
03/21/07	30000349	CLONAZEPAM 1MG TAB	1	6.95	
03/21/07	30000856	LEVOTHROID 137MCG TAB	1	6.35	
03/21/07	30000883	LORAZEPAM 1MG TAB	1	6.85	
03/21/07	30001648	TRIHEXYPHENID 2MG TAB	1	6.20	
03/21/07	30001670	TYLENOL 325MG CAPLET	2	6.05	
03/21/07	30002109	HALDOL 1MG TAB	2	12.80	
03/21/07	30002145	RISPERDAL 2MG TAB	4	41.60	
03/21/07	30002333	DEPAKOTE ER 500MG TAB	1	8.65	
03/21/07	30003025	DEPAKOTE ER 250MG	1	7.50	
03/22/07	51278	SUB IP CARE, LOW	1	105.00	
03/22/07	72121	CP3 PSYCH SEMI PRIV R	1	1474.00	

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03/22/07	30000349	CLONAZEPAM 1MG TAB	1	6.95	
03/22/07	30000528	DITROPAN XL 10MG TAB	1	9.70	
03/22/07	30000856	LEVOTHROID 137MCG TAB	1	6.35	
03/22/07	30000883	LORAZEPAM 1MG TAB	1	6.85	
03/22/07	30001648	TRIHXYPHENID 2MG TAB	1	6.20	
03/22/07	30002109	HALDOL 1MG TAB	2	12.80	
03/22/07	30002145	RISPERDAL 2MG TAB	4	41.60	
03/22/07	30002333	DEPAKOTE ER 500MG TAB	2	17.30	
03/23/07	30000138	ASPIRIN CHILD 81MG TA	1	6.05	
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03/23/07	30002109	HALDOL 1MG TAB	1	6.40	
03/23/07	30002145	RISPERDAL 2MG TAB	2	20.80	
04/12/07	8	PMT:MEDICARE (I/P)	-1		5048.97-
04/12/07	24	PMT:MEDICARE PT B PRO	-1		202.26-
04/12/07	40	ADJ:MCR PRO FEE ALLOW	-2		421.19-
04/18/07	25191	ADJ:MEDICARE ALLOW I/	-1		569.63-
04/24/07	27	PMT:STATE WELFARE (I/	-2		1042.55-
* - Not posted				Balance:	0.00